

Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Clark County



Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

CHAPTER 5

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND STRATEGY PLAN

OVERVIEW: DEVELOPMENT OF A BALANCED REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This chapter summarizes the solutions and strategies needed to provide an adequate level of regional mobility and accessibility over the next 20 years and to support the Growth Management Act land use goals for the region. A wide range of solutions and strategies are needed to meet regional travel demand. There are strategies to address the travel demand side as well as transportation system supply side, strategies to increase the efficiency of the existing regional transportation system as well as strategies to provide for capacity expansion to accommodate growth, solutions requiring physical construction and solutions requiring planning applications with consideration for multiple transportation modes. In developing a balanced regional transportation system it is not only capacity deficiencies which must be addressed but also preservation and maintenance of the existing regional transportation system, as well as plans to make for a safer regional transportation system for mobility of people and freight. All transportation modes are to be addressed. Development of a balanced regional transportation system with reduced dependence on the single occupant vehicle (SOV) relies on development of alternative modes of transportation, changed land use densities and patterns and/or changes in lifestyle. The chapter concludes with a map showing transportation system capacity expansion improvements included in the MTP and a map showing "Mobility" type improvement priorities.

MAINTENANCE OF THE EXISTING REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Of prime importance in the planning for the regional transportation system is the need to maintain the existing system. Maintenance addresses the day-to-day activities needed to keep the transportation system in good working order; daily operations that keep the system safe, clean, reliable and efficient. Such activities include incident response, filling potholes, repairing bridges, drainage ditches, guardrails, plowing snow, removing rocks, and efficiently operating traffic signals. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and local jurisdictions monitor the condition and operation of the existing system and program projects to maintain the system. The *MTP* supports the routine, regularly-scheduled and necessary maintenance work identified by local jurisdictions. The MTP supports maintenance being given high priority in the programming of transportation funds.

PRESERVATION OF THE EXISTING REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Preservation of the existing regional transportation system is also important to protect the heavy investments already made in the system. Preservation can prolong the life of the existing transportation system through such projects as repaving roads, rehabilitating bridges, seismic retrofit and rock fall protection. Preservation needs are identified through the Pavement Management System (PMS) and local needs analysis and the MTP is highly supportive of giving prime consideration to such project needs.

BRIDGE DEFICIENCIES

Maintenance and preservation projects required on bridges are identified through the Bridge Management System (BMS) managed by WSDOT. A list of the twenty-year identified bridge needs for Clark County is provided in Appendix B.

SAFETY DEFICIENCIES

Accidents, their number, location, and type, are monitored by WSDOT and local jurisdictions and if there is deemed to be a safety deficiency then remedial measures are considered and corrective action taken. The MTP supports regional system safety projects identified through the ISTEAs-required Safety Management System (SMS) and local plans and programs to correct safety deficiencies on the regional transportation system. Measures to improve the safety and security of the transit system for transit passengers and employees have been implemented by C-TRAN in keeping with Federal Transit Administration's Strategic Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

The prosperity of a region is dependent on the provision of transportation infrastructure to support economic development. Economic development emerged as the prime evaluation criteria for prioritizing MTP projects in discussions with the RTC Board of Directors (refer to MTP Regional System Improvements and Prioritization Process section later in this Chapter 5). Freight transportation needs have been addressed in a regional freight transportation study undertaken during 1993 to identify regional freight transportation issues and to investigate data availability and needs regarding freight transportation. The results of the study are documented in *Southwest Washington Regional Freight Transportation Study, Final Report* (December, 1993; RTC/JHK & Associates). The study noted the shortage of data relating to freight transportation. The report also noted the need for improved access to the Port of Vancouver via the Mill Plain Extension. There is need for data relating to transportation of freight through the region, freight delivery within the region and freight origins and destinations. A study, commissioned by the Port of Portland to support Metro's Region 2040 planning activities, suggests that freight rail transportation will increase significantly in the region during the MTP planning horizon. The WSDOT-developed Intermodal Management System (IMS) provides input on regional intermodal needs. The community has noted a concern about the transportation of hazardous materials on the transportation system. WSDOT adopted a Statewide Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) in 1995 which categorizes highways and local roads according to the tonnage of freight they carry. The FGTS is currently being updated prior to the 1998 legislative session.

NON-MOTORIZED MODES

The development of pedestrian and bikeway facilities to access the transit system and for use as an alternative transportation mode is supported by the Regional Transportation Plan. Reduced reliance on automobiles is largely dependent on the development of adequate sidewalks and bikeways to access activity centers and to allow for intermodal connections in use of the transit system. The development of non-motorized transportation modes is a strategy which will maximize the capacity of the existing transportation system. Sidewalk and bicycle path/lane projects are most appropriately identified at the local level and can be prioritized through the regional transportation programming

program if in competition for regional funding. Local jurisdictions within Clark County are giving more emphasis than in previous programs to non-motorized projects in efforts to redress the balance in transportation system development from highway and auto dependence to provision of alternative modes. Clark County has convened a Bicycle Advisory Committee to identify and prioritize needed bike projects. In addition, jurisdictions in Clark County have addressed the need for bicycle and pedestrian projects in their GMA plans and in the *Clark County Trails and Bikeway System Plan* (December 1992; Clark County). Notable pedestrian and bicycle projects in Clark County include completion of the City of Vancouver's Columbia River Waterfront Trail, the Discovery Trail, the Columbia River/Evergreen Highway Trail, Hazel Dell Avenue bike lanes and SE 164th Avenue bike lanes. Also of regional significance is improvement of pedestrian and bicycle facilities which will improve access to transit facilities.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

The MTP supports TDM as a strategy to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system. Transportation demand management strategies to reduce vehicle trips on the regional transportation system can include use of transit, carpooling, vanpooling, working of flexi-hours and/or compressed work week, and working from home with use of communications technology, known as telecommuting. A list of many TDM strategies is outlined in Table 5-1. Such TDM strategies will become increasingly important as travel demand in the region continues to grow but transportation investments do not keep pace. TDM strategies can help to preserve transportation system capacity and RTC Board direction is to promote the use of such strategies throughout the Clark County region.

Local jurisdictions have implemented the Washington State **Commute Trip Reduction** law and have set in place a program intended to reduce the work trips of employees traveling to and from places of employment with over one hundred employees who arrive at work between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. Each of the affected jurisdictions within Clark County have adopted an ordinance to establish the commute trip reduction program. The goal defined in Washington State's commute trip reduction law is to have major employers reduce commute trips by 15% by 1995, 20% by 1997, 25% by 1999 and achieve 35% reduction over the base year by 2005. Currently, there are thirty-six affected employers in Clark County.

A list of potential strategies for implementation in Clark County is contained in Appendix A2 of the MTP; "*MTP Strategies: Projects to Preserve System Capacity, including Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies*". Monitoring of the effectiveness of TDM is necessary to provide input to the regional travel forecasting modeling process. Prior to the next update of the MTP, a comprehensive analysis of TDM strategies is scheduled.

Table 5-1: Outline of Transportation Demand Management Strategies

Outline of Transportation Demand Management Strategies	
Type	Description
Education	Transport agencies, professionals and the public consider and understand TDM
TDM Marketing	Provide public information and encouragement programs
Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)	Employee commute trip reduction programs

Outline of Transportation Demand Management Strategies	
Type	Description
Programs	
TMA's	Transportation Management Associations provide trip reduction services in a commercial or employment center
Manage Special Transport Activities	Manage special types of transport and special events for efficiency
Financial Planning	TDM competes against capacity expansion in terms of cost effectiveness
Transportation Allowance	Provide commuter with a transportation allowance rather than free parking
Transit Improvements	Improved public transit service
Park and Ride	Parking at urban-fringe transit stops
Vanpool Programs	Promotion/organization of vanpools
Rideshare Programs	Rideshare promotion and matching
HOV Preference	Transit and rideshare lanes and other priority measures
Free Transit Zones	Free transit in commercial centers
Bicycle Improvements	Improved bicycle planning and facilities
Intermodal Bike	Bike lockers at transit stops, bike racks on transit vehicles
Telecommuting	Working at home to avoid commute trips
Alternative Work Hours	Flex time and alternative work weeks (such as 4 10-hour days)
Guaranteed Ride Home	Provide a limited number of free rides home for transit and rideshare commuters
Security	Address security concerns of rideshare, transit, cycle and pedestrian commuters
Parking Pricing	Charge users directly for parking. Charge by the hour or day rather than the month
Full Cost Pricing	Pricing reforms to encourage efficient transport
Road Pricing	Road tolls and congestion pricing
Mileage Fees	Per-mile charges for road use and/or distance-based vehicle insurance and registration fees
Fuel Taxes	Increase federal and state fuel taxes
Vehicle Restrictions	Prohibit vehicle use in specific areas
Cash Out Parking	Provide employees who do not drive the cash equivalent of parking subsidies
Reduce Parking Requirements	Reduce parking requirements in zoning laws
Preferential Parking	Preferential parking for rideshare vehicles
Vehicle Rentals	Encourage carshare cooperatives and neighborhood vehicle rentals
Land use Reforms	Higher density, mixed use, growth management
Neotraditional Planning	Develop neighborhoods that encourage walking bicycling and transit use
Traffic Calming	Use strategies to reduce vehicle traffic speeds when appropriate
Monitor TDM	Perform surveys and other monitoring of TDM program effectiveness

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT (TSM)

TSM is also a strategy to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system. In 1993, a study to investigate the feasibility of various transportation system management strategies was conducted by ODOT. The ODOT Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) study was coordinated with WSDOT and included analysis of traffic surveillance, traffic control and traveler information needs in the I-5, I-205, SR-14 and SR-500 corridors. TSM measures can include an incident response program, increased signage to alert motorists of travel conditions, ramp metering, improved communication means, Intelligent Vehicle/Highway System (IVHS) projects, channelization of traffic at intersections and traffic signal interconnects to improve the efficiency of operation of the regional transportation system. The need for ramp metering on some of the interchange ramps, with greatest need in the I-5 corridor, has been identified in the WSDOT Systems Plan component of the *Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan*.

TRANSIT

Transit system improvements are supported in the MTP. The transit transportation mode supports the land use goals established in the GMA Plans which envision denser developments in growth centers and in primary transportation corridors. Transit is also important in meeting the mobility needs of the transit dependent; those unable to drive automobiles because of age, infirmity, disability or low income. C-TRAN outlines a program for development of the transit system in their publication *C-TRAN Transit Development Plan 1996-2001* (C-TRAN, February 1996) which the MTP supports. Future development of the transit system will be shaped by the outcome of high capacity transit studies currently ongoing in the region and by land uses established in the Growth Management Plans of local jurisdictions. C-TRAN relies on its Level of Service Indicators matrix (see figure 3-15, Chapter 3) in determining the feasibility of transit service expansion. C-TRAN also outlines plans for future transit service in its publication, *C-TRAN Model Transit Sub-Element and Capital Facilities Plan* (C-TRAN, May 1994, Revised). Over the 20-year planning period an increase in annual transit service hours is forecast from the existing 288,000 hours up to over 440,000 service hours. To reinforce the success of transit system expansion, local jurisdictions need to address transit supportive urban design in providing for convenient access to the transit system.

WELFARE TO WORK

Transportation is one of the main challenges facing people making the transition from welfare to work. In support of that transition, the U.S. Department of Transportation in cooperation in other federal social service agencies is encouraging communities to plan and implement seamless and integrated transportation systems and services which address the numerous welfare to work transportation challenges.

C-TRAN has taken the lead among transportation providers in coordinating with the region's social service providers (DSHS, PIC, HSC) to develop a regional welfare to work transportation plan and pursue program grant funding. Program elements of the welfare to work transportation plan may include: supporting and developing services such as connector services to mass transit; vanpools; sharing buses with elderly and youth programs; coordinated human services and public transit transportation resources; employer provided transportation; Geographic Information System (GIS) based ride matching; guaranteed ride home programs; and public-private transportation partnerships. Some of these programs currently exist, and the outcome of the welfare to work plan will encourage

coordinating the services into a seamless system to address the transportation problems for the region's welfare recipients and other low income persons.

HIGH CAPACITY TRANSPORTATION (HCT)

The development of HCT is supported in the MTP to increase the transit carrying capacity of principal transit routes as a strategy to avoid having to provide increased highway capacity (refer to Transportation Management Areas (TMA's) and Congestion Management System (CMS) section below). Study of high capacity transit options were advanced in the South/North High Capacity Transit Corridor Study. A *Tier I Recommendation Report*, published by Metro, September 14, 1994, recommended that Light Rail Transit be developed in the I-5 corridor to Clark County with Phase I terminating in the vicinity of NE 99th Street and Phase II terminating in the vicinity of NE 134th Street. On the designated regional transportation system, (see Figure 3-3, *Regional Transportation System*) the I-5 corridor is designated a LRT corridor from the state line to the vicinity of Clark College and as a HCT corridor north to 134th Street, SR-500 (between I-5 and Orchards) is marked for potential future HCT extension and the I-205 corridor is designated as a potential future High Occupancy Vehicle/Busway corridor. On July 19, 1994, Metro released the *South North Transit Corridor Study, Draft Briefing Document, Tier I Technical Summary Report* to support the South/North HCT Corridor study recommendations. In 1995 the Clark County voters voted no to funding LRT development. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was prepared through a coordinated process led by Metro, Portland with a northern terminus in the vicinity of Clark College. The purpose of the DEIS is to identify and disclose anticipated impacts of a potential light rail line from the Clackamas Town Center area to Clark County compared to a "No-build" alternative. Alternatives and options were described in detail in the *South/North Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (FTA/Metro, February 1998). Plans are now moving forward to terminate an LRT line at Expo Center in Oregon. A *South/North Corridor Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* was issued by FTA/Metro in April, 1999.

COMMUTER RAIL/RAIL CAPACITY ISSUES

RTC has recently completed the Commuter Rail Feasibility Study (RTC, May 1999). The purpose of the study was to determine if commuter rail has the potential to serve as a low cost option to improve bi-state travel mobility by making more effective use of the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail transportation corridor between Vancouver and Portland. Commuter rail provides passenger service by shared use of rail tracks with freight operators and other rail users. The Study examined critical issues in the implementation of commuter rail and included: schedule reliability, operations, the impact of shared use with freight and inter city passenger needs, capital and operating costs, and ridership.

The Study concluded that, in a five year horizon, moderate levels of commuter rail service could be implemented between Vancouver and Portland with minor rail capacity improvements. By 2013, however, any level of commuter rail service would require a dedicated passenger track to accommodate the commuter service and the expected increases in freight and intercity passenger trains. The findings of this feasibility study indicate that a commuter rail system should not be pursued at this time unless it is determined that a major rail investment necessary to support future intercity passenger and freight rail growth in the corridor were to be made. Then, the concept of a commuter rail service should be revisited.

This rail corridor is severely constrained in terms of how much growth it can support without major capital investment. The commuter rail operations added a relatively small number of trips to the system but enough to trigger the requirement for a dedicated passenger alignment,. Current plans for intercity passenger and freight growth could trigger the need for major capacity improvements before the 2018 horizon year. The results of this Study have created the awareness of the need to initiate regional discussion about long-term rail capacity issues affecting freight and passenger needs. The capacity constraints in this corridor need to be discussed further, not only in the context of the commuter rail system concept, but also as they relate to the rapid growth of rail freight traffic in the corridor and plans for greatly increased intercity passenger service.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREAS (TMA's)

The Clark County region has been designated as a Transportation Management Area under ISTEA and TEA-21 because the region has a population greater than 200,000. In addition to meeting all the specified metropolitan transportation planning process requirements, MPO's representing Transportation Management Areas must meet additional requirements. In TMAs, the MPO must have a **Congestion Management System** that provides for the effective management of new and existing facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. In TMAs, such as the Clark County region, which have been classified as non-attainment for ozone and/or carbon monoxide, highway capacity expansion projects that result in a significant increase in single occupancy vehicles can only be programmed if consistent with the Congestion Management System. The CMS acts as the process for identifying deficient regional travel corridors, for evaluating non-SOV alternatives to address congestion, and for managing the performance of the system.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS)

The Congestion Management System (CMS) for Clark County was developed and operational by the deadline of October 1, 1995. The CMS identifies projects and programs for consideration in the metropolitan planning process. In November 1993, RTC released the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, Transportation Management Systems for: Traffic Congestion, Public Transportation Facilities and Equipment, Intermodal Transportation Facilities and System, Phase I, Final Report*. In October 1994, the *CMS Phase I Compliance Statement and Work Plan* was issued. Elements of the CMS include the identified CMS network performance measures and data monitoring plan as described in the two reports mentioned above. The CMS network is a sub-set of the regional transportation system; a set of 21 transportation corridors to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis as part of the CMS. The *Southwest Washington ISTEA Transportation Management Systems, Phase II Final Report*, which contains the CMS, was adopted by the RTC Board on May 2, 1995 (RTC Board Resolution 05-95-14).

The CMS is intended to be an evaluation tool for monitoring traffic congestion and for identifying improvement strategies. The CMS allows for the systematic monitoring of performance, identification of deficiencies, and the evaluation and recommendation of strategies. The evaluation becomes one part of MTP development. Consequently, the CMS process should be conducted on a cycle consistent with the MTP. However, performance of the CMS network is monitored on a more regular basis as new traffic volume data is available.

The CMS identifies a set of strategies that address regional congestion problems for consideration within the MTP process. As part of this process, the CMS strategies are weighed against other MTP goals and objectives. The recommendation of a strategy within the CMS to manage traffic congestion does not mean automatic implementation and incorporation into the MTP. It is recognized that selecting project priorities involves the consideration of many factors, of which congestion relief is just one.

AIR QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Southwest Washington Air Pollution Control Authority (SWAPCA) has developed, as supplements to the State Implementation Plan, two Maintenance Plans; 1) for Carbon Monoxide (CO), and 2) for Ozone (O₃). In October, 1996 the CO Maintenance Plan and in April 1997 the Ozone Maintenance Plan were approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mobile source strategies contained in the Maintenance Plans were endorsed for implementation by the RTC Board of Directors (Resolution 02-96-04). Prior to this the Vancouver region was classified as a 'moderate' nonattainment area for carbon monoxide air pollutants and a 'marginal' nonattainment area for ozone. Mobile emissions are a significant source of the region's air quality problems. As a result, transportation planning and project programming cannot occur without consideration for air quality impacts.

Mobile source emissions can be minimized through increased use of non-motorized transportation modes, through increased transit use, through transportation systems management measures (such as inter-connecting traffic signals and enhanced timing of signals) and travel demand management techniques (such as work flex-time, parking charges, carpooling and vanpooling programs); all supported by the MTP. Mobile emissions can also be reduced through technology-based transportation command and control measures, such as enhanced emissions testing (I/M) programs, expansion of I/M and fuel requirements. These types of strategies are called transportation control measures (TCM's).

RTC worked with Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) on development of methodology for mobile source emissions analysis and used the regional travel model data to develop mobile source emissions inventories. Transportation strategies identified in the SIP for the Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area include:

- expanded transit service
- an emissions testing (I/M) program for the area of Clark County within the Air Quality Maintenance Area (AQMA).

These strategies are implemented in efforts to maintain National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

In the Maintenance Plans an emissions "budget" is established for all sources of emissions that are not to be exceeded. In order to demonstrate that emissions stay within the budget during the maintenance period, the Maintenance Plans identify emission transportation control measures for all sources and these must be implemented during the ten-year period. The range of strategies in the Maintenance Plan includes transportation control measures to limit mobile source emissions. If the

budget is exceeded, additional contingency control measures must be implemented to lessen the emissions.

Both the MTP and TIP undergo air quality conformity analysis before they are adopted. Projects can only be programmed in the TIP if they come from a conforming *MTP*. A determination of conformity of the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* with the federal Clean Air Act, as amended in 1990, and the Washington Clean Air Act can be found in Appendix A of this document. Conformity with the Clean Air Act is also addressed in the metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program for the Clark County region. At the project level, non-exempt transportation projects have to undergo conformity analysis to show they meet federal and state air quality standards before completion of the design phase.

MTP REGIONAL SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS AND PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

Federal and state legislation, together with citizen input, has prompted the identification and implementation of alternative transportation solutions. Alternative solutions provide a way to avoid increasing capacity of the highway system through road widening projects. The MTP provides for strategies and solutions to meet regional travel demand and to develop a balanced regional transportation system over the 20-year planning period. Figure 5-1 is a map showing identified improvements on the regional transportation system. The map shows the location of necessary highway capacity expansion projects. Transit expansion is marked on Figure 3-3, *Designated Regional Transportation System*, in Chapter 3. Appendix A provides a listing of needed improvements, both on and off the regional transportation system, which have been assumed in the regional travel forecasting model process for MTP development and its accompanying air quality conformity analysis. The list focuses on system expansion projects for it is these that are most readily incorporated into the regional travel forecasting model and their impacts measured. The appendix also outlines the wide array of transportation system improvements which will contribute to the development of a balanced regional transportation system. Even with the extensive list of transportation improvements, increased congestion can be expected on Clark County's transportation system by the year 2020. In many of the transportation corridors, further system expansion through widening of existing highways will not be feasible. Therefore, it is imperative that this region continue to develop a more balanced transportation system to encourage use of alternative transportation modes to the Single Occupant Vehicle.

Following adoption of the MTP for Clark County in December 1997, a prioritization process was initiated as a result of concerns that funding for transportation "mobility" improvements is limited compared with growing needs. The process is described in the RTC technical report, *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Clark County, Prioritization of MTP Projects (RTC, October, 1998. RTC Board Resolution 10-98-16)*. A prioritization process helps the region to make most effective use of limited transportation funding to meet transportation system improvement needs.

"Mobility" type improvements became the focus of the prioritization process when it was realized that such projects are the ones the region finds increasingly difficult to fund after maintenance, preservation and safety needs are taken care of. In a rapidly growing, urbanizing region such as Clark County there is need for significant investment in "mobility" projects to complete the arterial street system and to improve the design standard of facilities to cope with urban traffic levels. It is recognized that Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management strategies can contribute toward system capacity preservation and are considered in the prioritization

process (refer to Appendix A2 of the MTP; “*MTP Strategies: Projects to Preserve System Capacity, including Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies*”). It is acknowledged that all of the projects evaluated in the MTP prioritization process, and probably more, are needed within the 20-year horizon of the Plan to attain reasonable transportation system performance. However, with limited funding availability, it is prudent to reach regional consensus on the highest priorities.

The prioritization process takes a strategic systems approach to determine transportation needs. Steps in the process for prioritization of regional transportation projects include 1) Development of a shared understanding of transportation system needs through review of existing and future transportation system performance, 2) Review major transportation policies governing regional transportation system development, 3) Agree on key policy principles for project prioritization, 4) Establish criteria for project evaluation, 5) Initial evaluation of projects based on criteria. (existing growth management land use plans, growth forecasts and results from the regional travel forecasting model are used as the basis for needs evaluation), 6) Re-evaluate projects (based on iterative performance analysis), 7) Consider project staging, finance and priority level, and 8) Recommendation of MTP regional priority transportation projects.

The following key policy issues emerged as the most important to emphasize in terms of project prioritization: 1) Economic Development, 2) Land Use and Transportation System Performance, 3) Transportation Demand Management (TDM), 4) Funding and 5) Bi-state Transportation Strategy. Economic development emerged as the prime criteria for project prioritization.

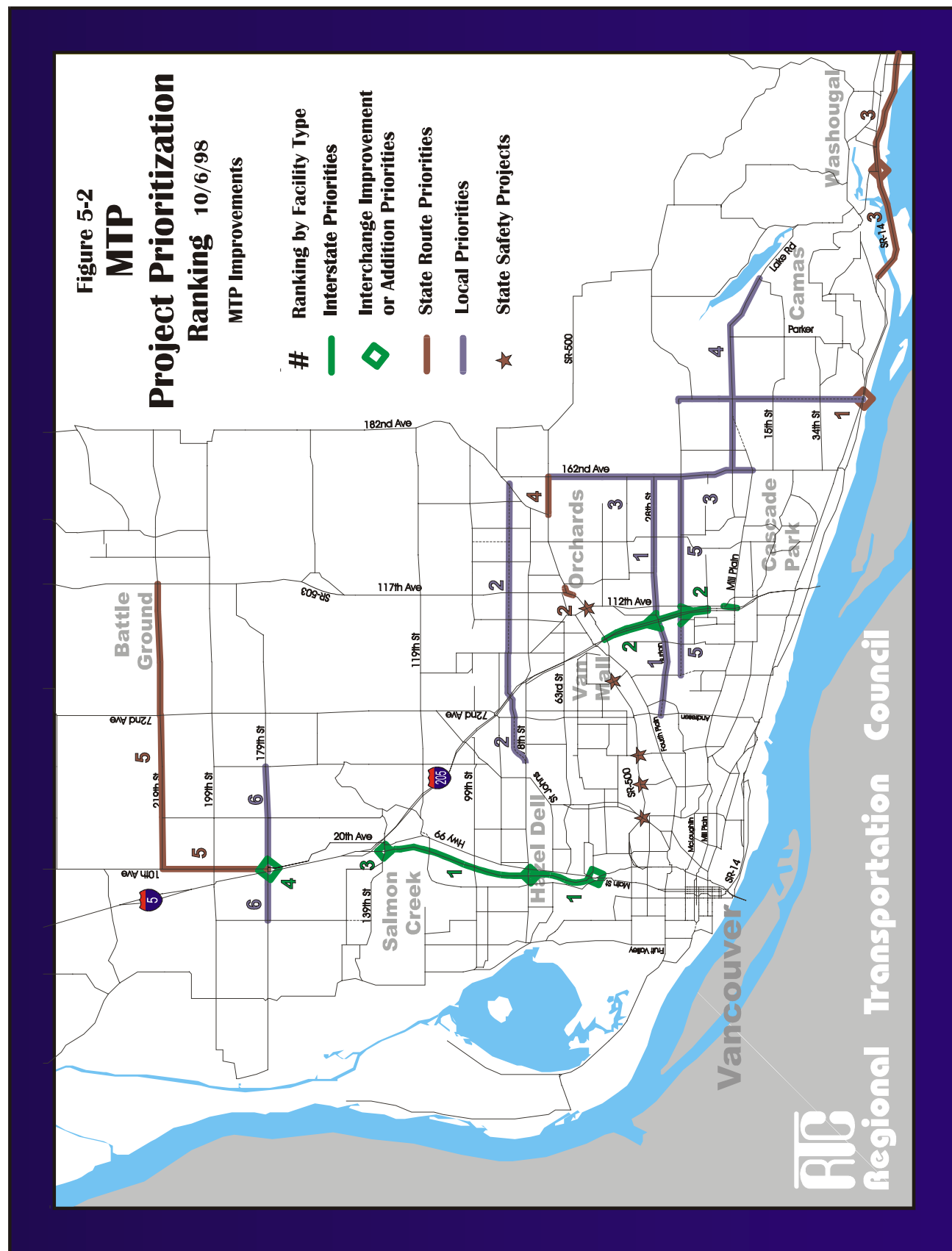
Project evaluation criteria, quantified results of project evaluation and the adopted project ranking is outlined in the matrix “*MTP Mobility Project Prioritization: Project Ranking, Quantitative Analysis of Policy Directives and Evaluation Criteria, October 6, 1998*” (see Appendix A1 of MTP). The projects considered in the prioritization process and their ranking, by interstate, state and local highway, are depicted on the map, Figure 5-2, of this chapter; “*MTP Project Prioritization Ranking*”. When selecting transportation projects for funding, consideration should be given to transportation projects which support community goals e.g. development of higher educational facilities in Clark County.

The project prioritization process is dynamic and project priorities will be reviewed with each MTP update to consider emerging trends and results and recommendations from ongoing transportation studies. Recent and ongoing studies are listed at the back of the MTP. The list of highest priority projects will not constitute the final determination to actually fund the projects. The funding and phasing decisions are carried out during the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process. Transportation improvements require programming of funding which is carried out in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the metropolitan area. It is in the regional TIP that federal funds are programmed. Projects which use local funding are programmed in the local Transportation Improvement Programs, developed each year by individual local jurisdictions.

Figure 5-1: MTP Regional System Improvements



Figure 5-2: MTP Project Prioritization Ranking



The Transportation Futures Committee

Throughout 1995 and 1996 the citizens' Transportation Futures Committee met to consider transportation issues, system improvement needs and strategies in the Clark County region. There follows a quite extensive description of the work of the Transportation Futures Committee as their work and broader community outreach is very significant to the future development of the Clark County transportation system.

The work of the Transportation Futures Committee and its findings is fully documented in the *Transportation Futures Committee Report*.

TRANSPORTATION FUTURES COMMITTEE: PURPOSE

The Transportation Futures Committee's purpose was to provide elected officials with a set of citizen findings that can be considered as transportation plans and programs are developed.

The work scope of the Committee was to:

- Review the community's transportation goals to be achieved by the transportation system in light of the adopted land use and transportation plans.
- Identify transportation policies for internal Clark County mobility, transit utilization, traffic congestion, freight movement, pedestrian/bike access, bi-state mobility and financing options that best match the vision for the transportation system.
- Measure a range of proposed transportation options by comparing the Committee's findings with the community's transportation goals.
- Identify the ways to engage the larger community in the discussion of future transportation issues and options.
- Report the findings of the Transportation Futures Committee to the community at large and to the Board of County Commissioners and Vancouver City Council.

The work included a review of previous study information and the development of new information, where necessary, to understand the facts and develop findings for the following:

- The role of alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel and strategies to reduce peak hour travel demand such as: carpooling, telecommuting, staggered shifts, local job creation, technology, and others.
- Clark County's current arterial system and determine what can be done to improve it and utilize it for alternative travel modes.
- The role of public transit as a component of the transportation systems in our community and the function of how mobility needs for urban, rural, bi-state transit service are best met.
- Bi-state travel demand between Clark County and Oregon and the best way to provide for the mobility for people and goods as the region continues to grow, including assessing bi-state improvement concepts such as a new highway corridor and bridge, I-5 and I-205 LRT, expansion of the I-5 corridor, and others.
- The current state of transportation financing and the most equitable approach for maintaining current funding levels or seeking new funding.

TRANSPORTATION FUTURES COMMITTEE: VISION

The TFC developed a 20-year vision which provided an approach to assess transportation options and lay the groundwork for identifying problems and constraints to achieving the vision. The Vision is described below:

To promote regional mobility of people and goods, Clark County will have a comprehensive transportation system accountable to the public that:

- *Provides choices and alternatives*
- *Enhances quality of life*
- And is:
 - *Socially, environmentally and economically responsible*
 - *Efficient*
 - *Responsive*
 - *Linked to land use*
 - *Safe, and*
 - *Accessible to all.*

TRANSPORTATION FUTURES COMMITTEE: FINDINGS

The Committee feel that these findings will best attain the vision and solve or address transportation issues and problems identified by the Committee.

1. OVERALL

The Transportation Futures Committee finds that current and past land use and transportation planning and funding have encouraged use of the auto to the detriment of alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel. The Committee recommends adjusting this imbalance by supporting a balanced approach to improvements, including public mass transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and roads.

2. POLICIES

The Committee finds that land use decisions should not only be supported by transportation planning, but should encourage more responsible neighborhood development that supports multiple transportation alternatives. Techniques to achieve this goal include:

- Allow for appropriate commercial development in predominantly residential neighborhoods
- Reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements in favor of maximum requirements
- Provide significant incentives for businesses to reduce parking needs and improve access for pedestrians, bicyclists and buses

The Committee finds that local government should include capacity for public mass transit and other alternative modes in overall road capacity when meeting concurrency requirements.

To reduce commuting trips, the Committee supports incentives for citizens and the private sector and requirements for government to encourage the following:

- Telecommuting
- Altered work hours (flex-time or staggered work hours)
- Ride-sharing

The Committee endorses sufficient funding for maintenance and necessary expansion of our existing road system.

The Committee strongly encourages consistent regular coordination between public and private entities engaged in transportation planning and construction.

3. INTERNAL CLARK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Committee favors a multimodal approach (i.e., roads, bicycle, pedestrian and public mass transit facilities) to address current and future transportation problems.

The Committee finds that a grid system improves links between neighborhoods, helps decentralize traffic throughout the road system, improves access for emergency vehicles, and fosters use of alternative means of travel (such as public mass transit, bicycling and walking).

- For new development, a grid system should be encouraged or required.
- For existing development, property owners should be encouraged to provide easements for bicycle or pedestrian paths or roads that increase transportation connections.

The Committee finds that the following facilities and techniques will help attain the vision. (Not in order of priority)

- High Occupancy Vehicle lanes
- Neighborhood traffic calming strategies
- Signalization/timing improvements
- Ramp metering
- Safety improvements
- Complete network of sidewalks

The Committee encourages local government to develop and implement a rating system for the quality and safety of non-vehicular transportation facilities.

4. PUBLIC MASS TRANSIT OPTIONS

The Committee finds that public mass transit is an integral component of a multimodal transportation system that provides alternatives to driving alone.

The Committee finds that current transit service should be more flexible and efficient. Some commercial or residential areas developed at urban densities are not adequately served. In other cases, existing service to more rural areas is not cost-effective and may not be desired by area residents. Consideration should be given to decreasing service in such areas to increase coverage and frequency in urban areas.

The Committee finds that public mass transit service provides a social service function by enhancing mobility for those who are unable to use a private automobile or other means of transport. The community should continue to be committed to providing public transit service to ensure mobility for all.

The Committee finds that paratransit service should be made available for the entire area within the Clark County/transit service boundary to improve mobility for all qualified citizens in the community.

The Committee recommends the following:

- Investigate serving middle and high school students with C-TRAN service instead of the current separate school bus system to reduce overall transportation costs and improve efficiency.
- Encourage private transit service while protecting the public utility aspect of C-TRAN.

The Committee also supports continued investigation of:

- Additional express routes
- Increased service between activity centers
- Use of smaller vehicles for feeder service
- Fareless areas

5. BI-STATE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

The Committee supports a balanced approach to bi-state transportation issues, focusing on:

- Reducing demand for new transportation facilities and improvements in the long-term, by:
 - Encouraging economic development that supports family wage jobs in Clark County and reduces the need to commute to Oregon.
 - Promoting the use of alternative modes of transportation to driving alone (e.g. public transit, carpooling, bicycling, altered work hours and telecommuting)
- Increasing capacity to accommodate long-term population growth and continued need for bi-state transportation facilities, with first priority on the I-5 corridor. Making more effective use of existing facilities is a high priority in this order of preference.
 - 1) Improved and/or expanded bus service
 - 2) High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (using existing facilities wherever possible)
 - 3) Commuter rail
 - 4) Light rail
 - 5) Reversible lanes
 - 6) Widening I-5 (highway and bridge) for general purpose traffic
 - 7) Ferry system

The Committee finds that a third auto bridge and highway corridor is not an acceptable solution to bi-state congestion.

The Committee finds that reducing automobile congestion and demand will free up capacity for freight highway needs. In addition, the Committee supports the practice of “piggybacking” (transporting truck containers by rail) as well as improved rail/truck/port connections (also referred to as multi-modal freight facilities).

The Committee urges local, state, and federal officials to actively represent the needs of Clark Commuters to Oregon.

6. LOCAL FINANCING

The Committee finds that the following transportation financing principles will best attain the Committee’s vision:

- The cost to the user of a transportation alternative, whether collected at the point of use or through taxation, should increase in proportion to use consistent with encouraging alternatives that minimize impacts on the environment and resource consumption.
- Funding for transportation alternatives that minimize impacts on the environment and resource consumption should be encouraged.
- Financing mechanisms that retain local money (i.e., taxes and fees) within Clark County and provide for local options should be favored.
- Public awareness of the true or full costs of transportation alternatives should be enhanced.

The Committee supports the following financing options, in order of preference:

- 1) Sales tax on motor vehicle fuel coupled with a reduction in motor vehicle excise taxes (MVET)
- 2) Local option gas tax and local option sales tax
- 3) State funds reallocated for alternative modes
- 4) Mileage-based fees
- 5) Tolls
- 6) Impact fees

The general public was given opportunities to comment on the findings of the TFC. An extensive survey of public opinion regarding the TFC findings was carried out and is reported on in the *Transportation Futures Committee Report*.